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ABSTRACT

A study investigated early adolescent Maori, Pacific Islander, and European New Zealanders' understanding of significance in New Zealand (Aotearoa) history through open-ended interviews with 49 11-13-year-old students. Participants understood history to have a dual purpose. First, history linked them to various national, racial, and ethnic heritages and second, it provided a window on the rest of the world. A framework of significance (fairness, coexistence, and instances where New Zealand served as a positive example to other nations) connected bits and pieces of the past into a somewhat cohesive whole, but the connections were tenuous. At the point at which these students were interviewed, their grasp of history was too insubstantial to support in-depth inquiry into the complexities of their own society or of its geosition, though the latter was an important feature of their discussions of historical significance. Findings suggest that students' perceptions of their global and national position frame how they think and learn, and how they assign significance to what they learn just as surely as do the more "local" elements of race, class, gender, and ethnicity (among other things). Includes 13 notes; contains 35 references and four appendixes: a list of materials used in interview task; interview protocol; students interviewed; and interview responses by gender. (Author/BT)

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The Well at the Bottom of the World:
Positionality and New Zealand [Aotearoa] Adolescents' Conceptions of Historical Significance

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Abstract

In this study, I investigated early adolescent Maori, Pacific Islander, and European New Zealanders' understanding of significance in New Zealand (Aotearoa) history through open-ended interviews with forty-nine 11-13 year old students. Participants in this study understood history to have a dual purpose. First, history linked them to various national, racial, and ethnic heritages and second, it provided a window on the rest of the world. A framework of significance—fairness, coexistence, and instances where New Zealand served as a positive example to other nations—connected bits and pieces of the past into a somewhat cohesive whole. But the connections were tenuous. At the point at which I interviewed these students, their grasp of history was too insubstantial to support indepth inquiry into the complexities of their own society or of its geosition, though the latter was an important feature of their discussions of historical significance. This study suggests that students' perception of their global and national position frames how they think and learn, and how they assign significance to what they learn just as surely as do the more "local" elements of race, class, gender, and ethnicity (among other things).

The Well at the Bottom of the World:
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Significance

Burke's Peerage in Britain is the book of the aristocracy. All the lords and ladies and their children get their names in the book. Whakapapa does that for all Maori of whatever standing or status. Any street child, any lost, urbanized Maori can take the name of his grandparents to their marae and the whakapapa man will tell him the whole forty generations of his ancestors. . . . [O]ur culture and our whakapapa give us very deep connection with each other. . . . You don't realise the impact of these things until you start thinking about who you are. Later in life, these memories pierce you.

Donna Awatere Huata (1998, p. 148)

There was also, within New Zealand, a climate of pride in national difference. Possibly, by the nature of their decision to emigrate, Pakeha¹ New Zealanders had demonstrated qualities of initiative, adventurousness and experimentation which created a social climate receptive to new ideas. Nineteenth century Pakeha settlers frequently congratulated themselves on having broken away from the influences of class, tradition and humbug which so constrained social progress in Victorian Britain. Women talked of the opportunities provided by a society in which the pattern of life was not yet set.

Sandra Coney (1993, p. 13)

A Maori meeting house is constructed to represent an ancestor with a head, backbone, ribs, and limbs. Upon entering the meeting house Maori enter into the body of their people. In combination with the whakapapa—forty generations of Maori genealogy—the meeting house links Maori with their history. But the history of New Zealand (Aotearoa) is not solely Maori. The North and South Islands are also a settler-colonial society in which Europeans set about centering themselves and their ancestry in a national narrative (Thomas, 1995). Despite the hegemony of settler culture, however, Europeans never fully displaced Maori culture. Instead, the settlers appropriated—sometimes inadvertently—Maori cultural forms and expropriated—often by force—European forms. More recently Maori civil and cultural rights activists have demanded fuller and more sensitive inclusion of Maori culture in all parts of New Zealand life—including in its national history. Meanwhile, Pacific Islanders, immigrants from the Pacific Rim, and from other parts of the world continue to enter New Zealand's national life. Where other countries in similar circumstances adopted the rhetoric if not the reality of multiculturalism, New Zealand "officially redefin[ed] the nation as a bicultural formation, one in which a kind of parity between indigenous and white settler cultures becomes crucial" (Thomas, 1995, p. 116). This bicultural policy (Maori and Pakeha) is challenged daily by the multicultural reality of life in New Zealand. Indeed, in its most recent revision of the social studies curriculum, the New Zealand Ministry of Education calls for attention to bicultural *and* multicultural aspects of New Zealand history. In accord with the bicultural aspect of this mandate, the

Ministry charged educators not only with recognizing and valuing the "unique position of Maori in New Zealand society," but with examining issues of racism, promoting non-racist attitudes in the school and wider community, studying the effects of colonization on Maori and Pakeha, and tracing the influence of Maori culture on New Zealand's social, cultural, political, and religious beliefs and systems (Ministry of Education, 1997, p.21). After acknowledging "the importance to all New Zealanders of both Maori and Pakeha traditions, histories and values" the ministry also charged schools with recognizing the multicultural nature of past and present New Zealand (Ministry of Education Education, 1997, p. 8). Indeed, schools are reminded that students "may need to meet more than one set of cultural expectations" and should therefore "consider how past experiences and actions are perceived, interpreted, and revised and how these perceptions and interpretations may influence people's views and actions in the future" (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The specifics of the situation in New Zealand, then, yield a post-colonial national history that is recognized, at least by the Ministry of Education, as complex and contested. Rather than view the potential disparity between versions of history encountered in different cultural settings—families, neighborhoods, racial and ethnic communities, for instance—as divisive educational policy makers have taken a different tack. They appear to strive for what Hollinger (1997, p. 565) describes as a history "'thick' enough to sustain collective action yet 'thin' enough to provide room for the cultures of a variety of descent groups." In theory, at least, individuals are expected to develop and express group identities but also to take part in "an ongoing collective debate about the character and direction of the nation" (p. 565). In order to direct attention to the different systems of ethnoracial classification used in New Zealand, including consideration of the various constituencies empowered or disempowered by these classifications, educators are expected to incorporate "values exploration" and "social decision-making" in the social studies curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1997). Instruction is supposed to connect history to current concerns by examining issues of social justice, the welfare of others, cultural diversity, and respect for the environment in historical context, and by suggesting possible strategies for dealing with these issues.

The potential for curricular attention to both historical agency and the citizenship functions of history in an explicitly bicultural and multicultural framework—one in which positionality is not only recognized but expected—make New Zealand an interesting site for examining early adolescents'

conceptions of historical significance. Studies in the United States (Barton, 1998; Barton & Levstik, 1998; Levstik & Barton, 1996; VanSledright, 1997) suggest that students there often ascribe significance to history on two grounds. First, like Santayana, they suggest that learning history prevents the repetition of past mistakes. Often, however, they are unsure about what the specifics of historical lessons might be. In particular, they struggle with the persistence of problems related to race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in the United States and Canada sometimes reject school history, preferring vernacular history—learned in family and neighborhood—for its perceived cultural utility (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Bodnar, 1992; Epstein, 1994, April; Seixas, 1993a). Other early adolescents in the United States assign significance to events or movements that integrate diverse groups and individuals into an overall story of progress and American exceptionalism. For them, the lesson to be learned is one of inclusion and fairness. They become confused, however, when faced with the persistence of exclusion and unfairness (Barton & Levstik, 1998). This confusion is linked to American students' second assumption about history—that history is an important way in which individuals learn about themselves and their connection to the larger society. In a multicultural society, *when, how, and if* groups and individuals are included in the historical narrative carries considerable weight. If history explains, even in part, who we are and how we are connected to the larger society, than national history takes on a uniquely personal significance. Perceiving oneself as a participant in some sort of sanctioned national story provides not only a connection to the past, but a sense of personal and collective worth. In contrast, individuals and groups left out of the official narrative may perceive themselves and be perceived by others as second-class citizens, cut off from the rights and privileges enjoyed by more favored citizens.

In different sociocultural contexts, however, perceptions of historical significance shift. Barton (1998) found that in Northern Ireland, where "stories of the origin and development of contemporary political and social relations are too controversial to present in primary schools and most other public institutions, and few children's books or television programs focus on the region. . . students conclude that the purpose of history is to learn about *others* and how *they* lived" rather than about students' personal or national connections to the past (emphasis mine)(p. 49). In describing the array of positions taken by Canadian students in regard to historical significance, Seixas (1997) noted that the tradition of Western history prevalent in the students' schools could easily force a "minority" student either to "[build] a

significant past around his or her own particularistic concerns or [adopt] the authoritative grand narrative while relegating self and family to the margin outside of 'really' significant history" (p. 27).

In a New Zealand study Alton-Lee, Nuthall, & Patrick (1993) documented some of the ways in which this marginalization occurs. Racial hierarchies were unwittingly introduced and reinforced in the social studies classroom through a systematic elevation of European experience over that of native peoples. As the study progressed, it became clear that the classroom consequences of this European-oriented perspective included the mistreatment of and disrespect for a Maori child in the classroom. Students enacted the racist curriculum in their day to day dealings with each other. Similar findings in the U.S. (Epstein, 1997; Levstik & Barton, 1996) and Canada (Seixas, 1993b) further suggest the importance of understanding how the social and cultural contexts within and beyond schools shape students' historical thinking and related social behaviors.

Cognitive theorists and researchers in other disciplines have argued for some time that cultural settings have an important impact on learning. Not only does the cultural context influence what is to be learned and how learning is to be used, but it also affects whether learners perceive what they are learning as significant. Attention to the sociocultural contexts surrounding historical thinking and learning, however, is relatively recent. This growing body of work indicates that children acquire information about history in a wide array of contexts, including family stories, the media, literature, and visits to museums and historical sites (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Levstik, 1986; Levstik & Barton, 1996). In addition, different groups in a given society or culture employ a variety of tools—ceremonies and celebrations, arts and artifacts, monuments and memorials—to teach their history and its related beliefs (Appiah & Gutmann, 1996; Bodnar, 1992; Cohen, 1994; Kammen, 1991). While some of this instruction occurs in events intended solely for the members of a particular group, others are shared with the larger public. A public event in New Zealand, for instance, may begin with a Maori welcoming ceremony. Sometimes, too, aspects of a group's history and culture are presented as entertainment—a "traditional" Maori hui (feast) enacted before an audience of paying tourists, for instance.

Making sense out of history—perhaps especially national history—can never be a simple task. This is especially the case in post-colonial, multicultural societies. In these contexts in particular, any investigation of children's historical thinking is also an investigation of positionality—of children's

different local and present as well as national or international and historical contexts. The influence of these contexts makes it difficult to decide *what* constitutes a nation's history. In New Zealand, as in other post-colonial nations, there has been considerable debate about precisely this issue. Middleton and May (Middleton & May, 1997) describe the contested terrain in New Zealand as one in which "'conservatives' primary objective is to preserve religious or other traditional values; 'liberal-left' arguments. . . conceptualize education mainly as a means of achieving democracy and equality; and the . . . 'libertarian-right'. . . emphasises—to varying degrees—individualism, competition, privatisation and diversity in a free-market setting" (p. 9). Add to this "Maori political movements, minority ethnic/cultural interests, various feminisms and other movements for sexual equality, and advocates for particular educational or religious philosophies" and it is clear why the history curriculum is so often contested ground. Indeed, reform of New Zealand's social studies curriculum (of which history is a part) became a forum for the expression of many of these competing interests, and the resulting curriculum standards reflect this. Not surprisingly, the final version of the curriculum document, published in 1997, acknowledges these competing perspectives, and claims that the intent of social studies is to "enable students to participate in a changing society as informed, confident, and responsible citizens" (Ministry of Education, 1997, p. 8). To accomplish this task, social studies is organized into strands (social organization; culture and heritage; place and environment; time, continuity and change; resources and economics) and processes (inquiry, values, social decision-making) aimed at providing students with "essential learning about New Zealand society" (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 10-11). Yet this is a new curriculum, with guidelines only recently established, and unlikely to be the foundation of much current practice. Of course, even if the new curriculum were more fully in place, little attention has been paid in New Zealand or elsewhere to how students—or anyone else, for that matter—go about internalizing these various representations of history (Barton, 1998). Without this kind of empirical data, educators are unprepared to disentangle children's historical myth-making and misperceptions from better grounded historical thinking. They are also unprepared to help students analyze the truth claims of either mainstream or vernacular histories. Finally, educators are also handicapped in their ability to prepare students to bring historical perspective to bear on their role as "informed, confident, and responsible citizens."

This study is one step in that direction. Building on work already completed in the United States, it describes some of the ways in which early adolescent students' positionality frames their understanding of their nation's past. It also describes some of the working theories—perceptions of the connections between past and present—underlying students' ascription of historical significance to certain events, ideas, and individuals (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Seixas, 1994; Seixas, 1997; VanSledright, 1997)

Setting

The study was conducted in four schools in New Zealand. Three of the schools were within a large urban area and the fourth was located in a small community within the commuter shed for the same urban area. The socio-economic status of schools in New Zealand is described in deciles from one (lowest) to ten (highest). The schools in the study included one each of decile one, eight, nine, and ten. Students were identified by school personnel to represent a range of achievement levels and an equal number of boys and girls. In addition, I specifically requested access to Maori, Pacific Islander and European/Pakeha populations. Because each school drew on the surrounding neighborhood for its students, and neighborhoods tended to be predominantly one group or the other, interview groups were also predominantly one group or the other. Maori and Pacific Islander children were concentrated in the "decile one" school. A second school (decile ten), largely European in ethnicity, had a number of Asian students, relatively recent immigrants to the neighborhood, and two Asian children (one each from China and Hong Kong) were included in the interview pool there. One child in the commuter shed school (decile nine) identified as part Maori, none as Pacific Islander, or Asian; at least four children in the fourth school (decile 8), self-identified as having some Maori heritage. Two children self-identified as North American, one Canadian and one United States (although he was born in New Zealand, he considered himself American because his parents were born in the U.S.).

Three of the schools (deciles one, nine, and ten) included primary age children on their campus. The fourth school (decile eight) did not include any primary age children. Each school was located on a campus that included large play areas, an array of small buildings housing one or two classrooms, a library, art room, and the like. Each campus was also landscaped with shrubbery, trees, and gardens. The decile one school had a greenhouse and garden worked by students who sold produce in the neighborhood. This school also involved students in outreach programs in the surrounding neighborhood. With a majority

Maori and Pacific Islander population, the school made extensive use of Maori symbols. One entry to the school grounds included a Maori arch and the school sign written in Maori and English. Murals on the walls and art in the classrooms made use of traditional Maori design as well. Two of the other schools incorporated a number of Maori designs in classroom displays, student artwork and the like. Several classrooms bore labels in Maori on doors, windows, and posters. I did not see evidence of Maori art or language on display in the fourth school, but as was the case in each school, Maori words were common in the students' informal speech and in the teachers' oral language as well.

Procedures

I developed a semi-structured interview similar to one used in a previous study with American adolescents (Barton & Levstik, 1998). This included a task requiring students to choose from among a set of twenty-three captioned historical pictures, as well as a set of broader questions designed to explore their understanding of historical significance. In selecting the pictures, I began with a set of 25 pictures representing New Zealand history from the arrival of the first known inhabitants to the election of Jenny Shipley, the first woman Prime Minister. These were derived from a variety of sources in the U.S. and New Zealand (see for example, Crawford, 1993; Coney, 1993; Salmond, 1991; Sinclair, 1989). In order to make comparisons between the American study and this one, I attempted to select pictures in similar categories—political/military, social (including attention to race, class, ethnicity and gender), technological, and economic history. I then met with a public historian in New Zealand whose work involves introducing school-age children to national history in museums and (previously) living history contexts. I also visited historic sites, museums, and a living history park, read curriculum guidelines, reviewed children's literature on New Zealand, met with colleagues with expertise in New Zealand's children's literature, sat in on portions of a teacher training program, attended an educational conference, and interviewed teacher educators as well as teachers in training to broaden my understanding of the larger context for history teaching and learning. After considering this background information, I narrowed my original set of pictures down to twenty-three, and, at the suggestion of the historian, added the Springbok Rugby Tour protests as an example of a civil rights movement. As I showed adults the developing set of pictures, I noticed that the Springbok Tour turned out to be an instant conversation starter, somewhat analogous to anti-war protests in the United States during the Vietnam War. It was clear that this was still a

"hot" topic for adults. Finally, I took the revised set of pictures and tested them with a class of teachers in training. These individuals already had undergraduate degrees in a variety of fields and were working towards initial certification. They provided feedback on which pictures they thought were interesting, historically significant, confusing, or unimportant. As a result of this feedback, I eliminated a picture that failed to elicit much interest or provoke conversation. The final set of pictures and captions are described in Appendix A.

I audiotaped interviews with 49 students between the ages of eleven and thirteen, and conducted all interviews with single-sex groups of either three or four students.² I began interviews³ by explaining to the students that they would be looking through a set of pictures with captions and then working together as a group to decide which eight were important enough to include on a time-line of New Zealand history. I then handed the set of pictures to students and allowed them to work through the task with minimal guidance. After they selected eight pictures, I held up each of their chosen pictures, read the caption aloud and asked them to explain their choice, to explain why someone else might have chosen other pictures, and to talk about history both in and out of school. I also asked them to suggest any pictures I should have included in the set. In addition to asking questions from my formal protocol, I frequently probed students' responses in order to explore more fully the reasoning behind their answers. (The complete interview protocol is included in Appendix B).

After transcribing the interviews, I tabulated students' choices, analyzed interview transcripts and drew conclusions from them through a process of analytic induction. I identified a set of thematic strands in students' responses, and subjected the transcripts to a systematic content analysis in which I categorized responses according to coding categories based on those strands. Many of the initial categories were broken down, combined, or added to during the course of coding, and the coding included a systematic search for negative or discrepant evidence. I also coded the transcripts using the categories developed in the U.S. study. I then analyzed the coded data using cross-case analysis (in which I grouped the answers of students responding to the same items in the selection task and interview) and constant comparison (in which I compared students' responses across different portions of the task and interview). During the process of coding and analysis, I explicitly searched for differences in girls' and boys' explanations, and for

differences between age groups.⁴ This resulted in a set of descriptive generalizations that form the basis for my conclusions, which I describe in the next section.

Results

Why Study History?

In order to assess and assign historical significance, students must have some notion of the purposes of history. If, for instance, history functions to reify the established order, certain people, events, and ideas become more significant than they might be if history were perceived as a different kind of enterprise—establishing personal connections with the past, bringing historical perspective to bear on present issues, or explaining other people's actions in the past. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (1998) clearly states that the function of studying history is to inform students about New Zealand's "place in the world, and the development of [its] culture and identity" (p. 18). I was curious, then, to see what the students thought about the purposes of studying history. When I asked students whether learning national history was important, they said that it was important—although not always interesting—and proposed two reasons for its importance. First, they argued that history connected them to their own personal and ancestral past. As one student, Jean, explained, "it's part of us, where we came from and our ancestors and stuff like that, and we'd have a different life." "Yes," her classmate Alexi added, "You couldn't respect those things if you didn't know them." As Leslie noted, "you should know it as background." The theme of tracing ancestry and respect for those who came before you appeared in some form in all the interviews, but it was most richly elaborated in discussions with Maori and Pacific Islander students. After her interview group noted that the timeline should have included attention to *whakapapa*—the genealogy of Maori history—a Maori girl, Kiri, described the importance of passing down "stories. . . about people who have been in New Zealand, like the people who have been in the wars are like heroes, and I think that our children can learn about that and I think that will be just great, just knowing about your past and the people who were around before they were." When asked what would happen if children didn't learn this, Kiri thought for a moment, and then said "I think you would feel empty. . . Its just like people who are fostered, and they don't have any parents, and they ask, 'how did I get here', that sort of thing. History is a big part of knowing who you are." In another group of Maori and Pacific Islander boys, Witi said that "if you knew nothing about anything that happened before you, you would need help, you wouldn't know

anything about New Zealand," but cautioned that "if you got it in one story—in school, maybe—you want them to have it in another story. Not just one group's history."

Second, students ascribed importance to history as a source of national pride—a way of explaining to others "why our country's so good." This theme arose as students explained that they rarely studied New Zealand history and that they sometimes felt "last in the world." In fact, in all but two groups students asked me if they were "as smart as other kids in the world." They commented, too, on how little the rest of the world—particularly Americans—knew of New Zealand. "You probably know all about America," Linlee commented. "And we know about America, too. But they [Americans] don't know much about here." A boy in another group made a similar point, explaining that "you have American history in your schools, and we don't have anything like that." When asked if they would like to learn more about New Zealand, however, he and his group were unenthusiastic. "Well, sometimes," they said. Perhaps because they were being interviewed by an American almost all the groups said studying New Zealand's history might be important "like if someone from a different country asked you, you could like tell them." "So," Tama said, "you can tell people about New Zealand, and they'll come and visit. When they go home they can say we [students] knew all about New Zealand."

Overall, however, the students reported that they were less interested in studying New Zealand's history than in learning about other parts of the world. As one girl, Heather, explained, "being in New Zealand, you're expected to say New Zealand, but I know the general outline, you know, but that wouldn't be like my favorite subject. I'd like somewhere different, like India, or Egypt, with the mummies." Specific places most commonly mentioned as worth studying were America/the United States (12 groups), Britain (8 groups), and India (3 groups). In four groups students mentioned that they either already had or intended someday to live in the United States and so "needed to know about your history." "I lived in America," Hamilton explained. "And I reckon they've got a more interesting history because before with the slaves and stuff, that's probably more interesting than any of our history. I'd pick [to study] about the slaves and stuff." Other students who had lived or traveled in Canada, Australia, and Japan thought these countries worth learning about. More commonly, however, students expressed interest in knowing about "really different kinds of places" or people and events in the news "for instance this new guy in Serbia and stuff." When asked why they felt this way, students explained that these places, people or events were more

interesting and that it was "important to know what people were doing before your time." In each group students also claimed that they liked studying "what came before us" and "what people used to do." As one of the boys, Tainui, noted, "I think it's just like soap operas and that sort of thing. . . a show like *Shortland Street*" [a popular television soap opera]. Tainui also suggested that teachers might consider the soap opera aspects of history as they planned instruction. "Maybe if they were making it like that, but we didn't know we were learning" he mused. "If they were going to teach us something?" Other students suggested that learning the history of distant peoples made them "think differently about stuff," and "understand a different point of view." For still others, the history of distant people and places was appealing because "sometimes you just want to know stuff," and "I wonder how they lived." In sum, for at least some of the students in each interview group, history was intrinsically interesting in much the same way as a good novel. It had something to say about the human condition, and, potentially at least, could be entertaining.

Given that students reported spending relatively little time on history in school,⁵ it is important to consider where they *did* learn history. In what contexts had they encountered history that they perceived as important and entertaining? When asked how they learned about history students did report studying some history topics in school. The topics most often recalled by the students included founders and settlers (Maori and Pakeha), Captain Cook, the Treaty of Waitangi, and Anzac Day. On Anzac Day, one child explained, "we learn about the poppies and sing the national anthem." More often they reported that their information about history came from home, media, participation in social/cultural group activities, visits to historic sites and museums, travel, and trade books (in that order). "The Treaty [of Waitangi], it's on the news and stuff, and on Holmes⁶ [a television news/commentary program] and stuff," Hamilton said. Ames added that he had visited "the gold rush place." Stefan took summer classes at a nearby museum—"It's awesome"—and read "heaps of books and war stories." Susan also listed library books as a source of some of her historical information and interest. "There is a book in the library," she said, "that shows people in this school a long time ago, and that's fun to look at." Joseph's father talked about history "but I don't usually listen 'cause it's all his past, like what he did as a kid. The strict old days!" Hamilton and Stefan also described visiting historic places and museums in the United States as sources of interest and information. Moira enjoyed skimming through her computer encyclopedia. She was particularly interested in "stuff people left behind. . . fossils, what they write and they sometimes drew pictures on walls and

things." Deirdre enjoyed "grandparents. I like those stories." In fact, in each group, students mentioned parents or grandparents as good sources of historical information. In two groups students also reported learning history during visits to a marae (a Maori gathering place). Students in three other groups added that they had learned a good deal of history from American movies, particularly *Saving Private Ryan* and *Forrest Gump*.

It is against this backdrop of images and experiences, among other things, that these New Zealand students construct their understanding of historical significance. As did their American counterparts, they understand history to have an important connection to personal, group and national identity (Barton & Levstik, 1998). Nonetheless, they see history as most interesting for the information and understanding it provides about other people, distant in place as well as time, different in language, culture, and customs. In this latter understanding of history they are more like their peers in Northern Ireland (Barton, 1998). In melding the two perspectives, the New Zealand students provide interesting insights into some of the connecting principles underlying their historical thinking (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Bodnar, 1992; Boner, 1995; Commager, 1965; Rigney, 1995).

The Well at the Bottom of the World

American children perceive their nation to be exceptional—possessing a unique set of freedoms and opportunities guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and supported by a beneficent technology. Not only do they expect their nation to expand these freedoms and opportunities to those previously disenfranchised, they also expect the United States to set a moral standard by "stand[ing] up for people," and "help[ing] other countries" (Barton & Levstik, 1998, p. 490). Recalling this national image from my research with American students, I wondered about New Zealanders' national self-perception. I began by asking Neil Matheison, the museum historian with whom I discussed the choice of pictures for the timeline, what he considered to be the prevailing self-image. As had Sandra Coney in the comments that opened this paper, Matheison described a pride in national difference, a pioneering spirit, sense of initiative, and willingness to experiment. A Kiwi, he suggested, was thrifty, practical, and handy, able to "fix anything with a bit of #8 wire." Referring to the experience of WWII, he called up an image of Kiwis fixing up and using what their more wasteful American counterparts threw away.

To some extent, these same sorts of things are said of any pioneering people. But New Zealand's self-image combines a pioneering spirit with a feeling of existing on the world's margins. In a sense, this marginality is also seen as one of New Zealand's strengths. As Witi Ihimaera (1994), a well-known New Zealand author suggests, "our strength is in our independence, our boldness, and *in being sufficiently on the edge of things to be able to assess what is happening elsewhere. . . . We are the well at the bottom of the world*" (p. 32) (italics mine). The "archetypal" New Zealanders sprung from this well—"good keen men" and "independent women"—have a "healthy disrespect for authority and [rely] more on their own sense of what's right and what isn't" (p. 151). This image of an inventive, clear-eyed margin that speaks truth to power is reflected in the students' responses.

The New Zealand students definitely saw their country as on the world's margins. Perhaps the image of marginality strikes an American so clearly because it is such a contrast to American students' assumption of the centrality of their nation in their own lives and in the world. In contrast, the New Zealand students described their country as distant from centers of influence and assumed their nation to be somehow "behind" the rest of the world. All students, for instance, expressed surprise that New Zealand had the world's first old age pension, and only one knew that New Zealand had been among the first to give women full suffrage.⁷ In fact, as one girl picked up the picture of women voting she said, "Let me guess, we were probably last with that" and her peers laughingly agreed.

Part of this response may be explained by the overwhelming influence of American and British media, to say nothing of American commercial hegemony. Because of the high production costs of television in a country with a relatively small market for advertisers, New Zealand commercial television is dominated by cheap American and British imports. The film market is also dominated by imports, most often from the United States. But this is only a modern sign of a colonial past that focused New Zealanders' attention on Britain and the West, rather than on themselves, the Pacific, and Asia. Not only did New Zealanders fight for the British Empire and adopt many cultural and social patterns from Britain, Britain was their major trading partner. In addition, while colonialism did not have the benefits Maori had hoped would come from the Treaty of Waitangi, there is a sense among some Maori that British imperialism was preferable to the depredations of war and settlement that preceded it (Cohen, 1998). Finally, New

Zealanders did not revolt against Britain. They did not need to establish a clear and separate national identity and history as did rebelling colonies such as the United States, Kenya, or India.

Given the centrality of the colonial experience, the continued friendly relations with their former colonizer, and the current political, social, and economic influence of the United States, it is not surprising that students expressed interest in learning about Britain and the United States. It is also understandable that they sometimes described a David and Goliath-like relationship with both. This was particularly apparent in relation to New Zealand's ban against American nuclear ships entering New Zealand's waters and protests against French nuclear tests in the Pacific. While only two groups selected each event as a final choice for the timeline, one or the other often stayed in the pool of pictures until the very end of the selection process. More importantly, both pictures invariably generated a good deal of conversation among the students. In considering the significance of these pictures, for instance, students generally began by discussing their aversion to nuclear "stuff," conflating nuclear power with nuclear bombs and the testing of those bombs in the South Pacific. In a statement typical of this sort of response, Rene argued that antinuclear protests "stopped nuclear bombs." Similarly, a group of boys explained that "it's so dangerous—nuclear power isn't so bad, but nuclear bombs and stuff [are]." They commented that "if we had nuclear stuff we'd have to spend a lot more money on stuff we don't need." Once students had established that nuclear weaponry and testing were problems, they moved on to discuss American intervention in New Zealand's affairs. By trying to force New Zealand to allow nuclear-powered vessels into New Zealand's waters, they perceived the U.S. to be "stubborn" and an international "bully." "The U.S. threatens New Zealand's defense," Kyle argued. When Ellen suggested that the U.S. "wouldn't like it if we tested in *their* waters" Sally added that "what you do to them [the U.S.], they'll do it back." "Yes," Ellen said, reflecting a common concern across groups, "they could bomb you." In another group, Joseph explained that "if they [New Zealanders] didn't protest, we could have been blown away." Ellen couldn't understand why the U.S. failed to understand that the ban on nuclear power and nuclear testing was good because the oceans "wouldn't get bombed anymore. You can't drink water that is contaminated." With the ban in place, Alexi said, "everybody might survive." Ultimately, though, the students thought that the U.S. should not intervene in New Zealand's business, regardless of whether New Zealand's policies were good.

As Jason argued, "we can do whatever we want in our backyard." And, echoing Ihimaera (1994) Alexi suggested that New Zealand "just might have something to teach the rest of the world" about this issue.

In order either to "teach the rest of the world" or learn from it, the students recognized that New Zealand would have to be connected to the world, and so they regularly ascribed significance to events that, in their minds, did just that. "Just to say that Kiwis did actually go over [to fight in World War II] and help out, you know what I mean? That is important," Kiri explained. Karen argued for the inclusion of World War II on the basis that it "put New Zealand in touch with other people." Kiwis were perceived as learning from these encounters. As Stefan, explained in regard to World War II, "sometimes, especially like the Jews in WWII, they thought, 'Oh, if we just go along with it, it's not going to get too bad' but it just kept getting worse, and worse, and worse." What New Zealanders learned from this was that "you just don't tolerate any type of racism or anything."

In addition to war as a way of connecting with the world, all but three groups (all three at the predominantly Maori/Pacific Islander school) suggested adding Edmund Hilary to the timeline. Although Hilary was not pictured, his name came up spontaneously in two groups, and was suggested in response to a question about what was missing from the choices for the timeline in the rest of the groups. Hilary represented a different kind of link with the world than did World War II. His explorations of Everest and Antarctica attracted international attention and "people learned from them." In this instance, New Zealand had something to teach. Similarly, when students selected Captain Cook's explorations for the timeline, one of their arguments was that Cook's reports back to England "told the world about [New Zealand]." Acknowledging that Cook and the Endeavour weren't the first Europeans to mention the islands, students nonetheless marked Cook's trip out because, as Chris explained, "he wasn't the first, Abel Tasman was the first, but [Cook] told the world about it." Tom added that "he told Europeans."

In their conversations about New Zealand's connection to the world students saw their country as a participant in a reciprocal relationship with other nations. New Zealand learned from other places—about how other people had met and solved, or failed to solve, problems—but they also had something to share. New Zealand offered the world a different perspective—the water from the well at the bottom of the world, if you will—a strong ally with a willingness to resist pressure from the centers of power, and an insistence on what students perceived to be moral, just and, most often, *fair* treatment of people.

The Fairness Doctrine

Two of the top choices for the timeline, women's suffrage and the Treaty of Waitangi, along with education and the pension were, from the students' perspective, ultimately about fairness. In sharp contrast to their American and Irish contemporaries, *every group* identified women's suffrage as one of their choices for the timeline. The Treaty of Waitangi was selected by all but two groups, making it the third most often selected picture (Captain Cook's explorations tied with women's suffrage), education was chosen by seven groups, and the pension by five. Students explained that all four pictures were significant, at least in part, because they demonstrated the move toward "equal opportunity" and "fairness" for all New Zealanders.

In considering the significance of women's participation in New Zealand history, for instance, each group declared that equal participation in public life was "only fair". Even in the one group of boys where there was a brief suggestion that women's suffrage had nothing to do with them, they ultimately included it on the grounds women "helped run the country"⁸ and therefore the right to vote was "quite important". A few students also thought that males and females might think differently about the significance of women's suffrage, but even this was a distinctly minority viewpoint. As one group of boys pointed out, with more women in the population than men it was only fair that both groups could vote. Boys also argued that women were "just as important"⁹ as men, could do the same kind of work, and had skills that were necessary to the country. In discussing women's contributions to New Zealand history, they noted that educating women as well as men for jobs was important because women who had skills could "go on and teach other people how to do it." Girls said similar things, adding that, because men had always had power and there was "discrimination against woman-kind," it was especially important that women have the vote. "Men would roll over us more" without the vote, one girl explained. "It's only fair that women have an equal say." Jason pointed out that the country needed the labor of both men and women, and that it made no sense to discriminate. Moana declared that if "men have everything. . . it isn't fair."

Among the predominantly Maori and Pacific Islander groups, there was additional discussion regarding the length of time it had taken for women to get the vote. In one group, Kiri lifted up the picture of women voting, read the caption, and asked, "1893, eh? And why not before that?" Her classmate,

Tiana, nodded, equally unimpressed. "When did *men* first get to vote?" she asked. In a group of boys, Tama asked what there had been to vote *for*, suggesting "votes for women are important, unless men couldn't vote either." When Peter explained that "before only men voted," Tama declared "then women getting to vote, that's only fair!"

Interestingly, after declaring that it was only fair that women and men share equally in public life, students in each group acknowledged gender inequities in private life, especially in families. Women did more work at home, they agreed. Shawn explained that "less men take care of the house" and that would need to happen "to make it more even." Several noted that seeing women in public positions—Prime Minister Jenny Shipley,¹⁰ for instance—provided important "role models for other women." These public figures, they argued, were evidence that women "can do the job same as a man." "Yes," Ames said, "They can do exactly the same jobs [as men], and then other women learn that they can do that, too." Several of the boys cautioned that despite the prominence of some women, inequities remained. Hamilton said that women did not have equal numbers in Parliament, nor did they run as many businesses as men. Tama and Meara mentioned that women did more work at home "because they have the babies," a point made by at least one student in each of the girls' groups.

As did women's suffrage, the Treaty of Waitangi represented fairness, though in regard to race and ethnicity rather than gender. All of the students had heard of the Treaty.¹¹ Unlike women's suffrage, however, where students generally agreed on what women's suffrage meant and why it was important, the Treaty generated considerably more confusion and controversy. At bottom the Treaty might be about fairness, but what kind of fairness and to whom was definitely at issue. From the perspective of most of the Pakeha students, the Treaty made it possible for Maori and Pakeha to "both settle in New Zealand and not fight over the land." This assessment was reiterated in all but one of the predominantly European New Zealander groups. In each group, however, there was also recognition that the Treaty had not worked out quite that way. On the one hand, Stefan explained, "[The Treaty] is where the Maori decided to get along with the whites, supposedly, and whites were actually coming to New Zealand. The Treaty was sort of a passport for whites to come to New Zealand, but it didn't work out quite the way the Maori had thought it would. They got ripped off, some of the land, you know. The whites bought it for three purple beads and a musket 'cause the Maori didn't know the value of property." Alexi explained that as a result, "we've got

Maori claiming land now." Her classmate Ellen agreed, "The Maori want land the Pakeha's have." On the other hand, Sally explained that the Treaty was "important for Maori because they got to *keep* land, and forests, and fisheries. It was between the Maori and the English. Pakehas." Alan made a similar point, explaining that Maori used the Treaty "whenever there's something wrong. They always go back to the Treaty and find something that helps." Dougal agreed, explaining that "they say they didn't get enough land." When asked if this was an accurate assessment of Maori's situation, Dougal responded by saying that "It's hard to tell what Maoris should have had, because there's lots of different tribes and things. . . . There must have been something wrong with the Treaty because there's still trouble over it." After listening to her peers explain that people were still fighting over the fairness of the Treaty and its aftermath, Rachel shrugged her shoulders and said, "well, *Maori* do." In her opinion the fight was one-sided and more of a concern to Maori than to any other New Zealanders.

As had their Pakeha peers, Maori and Pacific Islander students agreed that the Treaty of Waitangi was significant because it was about fairness—"how Maori would be treated"—but understood the issue rather differently than did most of the Pakeha students. Ripeka explained that the Treaty was "how the Maori and the Pakehas came together to make a compromise about land, that's what I think, and just to think that the Pakehas tricked . . . they signed this bit of paper that said, well, we'll have this kind of land and that sort of land." Her classmate, Irihapeti interrupted, saying "Well, what I'm going to say is, the Treaty of Waitangi, its about fighting over your land, and if the teachers were to go over *that*. . . there would be a *lot* more to tell than just a few little battles they had." Ripeka agreed, adding "it would be, because like Pakehas don't actually rely on the land that much, do you know what I mean? The Maori used the land as much as they could, and I think we could learn from that, from the things they've left behind." In another group, Kiri explained that she thought the Treaty was important to her as a Maori, "because I want to be part of that past, and what happened with Maoris."

When asked what might have happened without the Treaty, issues of racism became more specific and further complicated the students' notions of fairness. Without the Treaty, there would have been no queen, most agreed, though Hamilton was sure that someone else would have colonized New Zealand. "The French, probably," he said. Reed and Paul, however, thought that the country would have stayed Maori and "white people would have to live like Maori, rather than the other way round." Paul added that

"the Maori people could live where they wanted." When I asked if Maori had been able to live where they wanted under British rule, the four boys in this group said that had not always been the case. "Maori are protesting this now," Paul said. "Before they owned it, but . . ." his voice trailed off. Frederick explained that "some people don't like the white people," and was cut off immediately by Reed, who said "and some white's don't like Maori." "Without the Treaty," Paul said, "then the Maoris and the whites would be fighting." In another group, Hamilton suggested that it "would be fair to give [the land] back" but it would be very complicated to do so. "I reckon everyone should have the same like, should all be equal. You shouldn't get anything just because you're Maori, or you shouldn't get anything just because you're Pakeha." Reed had a different idea about what was fair. "The Maori," he said "when their ancestors signed the treaty, they said they could have that land. . . . They could have said we don't want you on our land, it's ours, but they let us come here." "Yes," Robert said, "and then we took all their land." Frustrated, Robert said, "I think we should all just live peacefully." When asked how that might be accomplished, Reed precipitated this lively exchange:

Reed: Send them all to Auckland!

Robert: NO!

Frederick: Give them back what's rightfully theirs!

Researcher: And that would be?

Reed: It was all theirs before Cook came.

Robert: So they should have?

Reed: All of it? Maybe not all of it, but quite a bit of it?

Robert: More than 50%.

Frederick: No.

Reed: No, they didn't have to let us take it.

Frederick: Now they want it back

Reed: Now that we've taken over

None of the Maori or Pacific Islander students engaged in this sort of exchange. While they thought the Treaty was important, and that it represented an occasion when Maori were dealt with unfairly, they did not mention returning land to Maori people. Instead, they suggested that the Treaty represented an

opportunity lost to greed. The Pakeha could have learned to use the land more wisely, the Maori students said, though they were not specific about what that wise use might look like.

The third picture chosen for its relationship to issues of fairness was education. Seven groups selected this picture for the timeline. It was only fair, the students argued, for the government to operate public schools "because it gave everyone, rich or poor. . . the right to read, and to an education, so when they grow up to get jobs, they would know how to read and write." Before that, Reed said, "just the people who could afford it could go to school, then, like everyone could." As did most of the students who commented on the significance of education, Ames thought that public schooling made it possible for "everyone to get an equal education. Most schools in New Zealand now are pretty much equal." They agreed, too, that an equal education meant an equal chance at employment. In fact, every group mentioned this as an argument for the importance of education, whether they eventually put it on the timeline or not. As Kiri noted, "a lot of people, especially in this area [around the decile one school] wouldn't be able to go to school, and there's a lot of people, if it was for money, they wouldn't be able to go to school. It's like we're the next generation, and we need to be able to work so we make money and so we can bring up our families." "You can't do much without an education," agreed Tiana.

After New Zealanders had found a job and worked the requisite number of years, students uniformly argued that they deserved a pension. Although all groups indicated that they thought giving retired people a pension was "only fair," only five selected the pension as among the eight choices for the timeline. Nonetheless, their conversations as they considered the pension are illustrative of the function of "fairness" as an organizing principle in their historical thinking. This was particularly vivid, too, because the Shipley administration had just cut cost-of-living increases for pensions and at least one student in each group was able to explain something about the controversy this caused. Students in two of the schools (decile one and decile eight) were clear about the inability of adults to put aside enough money for their old age. When asked why that was so, Riwia responded by explaining that raising a family absorbed most people's income and left them little to save. "They've worked all that time, and taken care of all of us," she said. "It's only fair that we take care of them when they get old." Students in the wealthier schools were less specific, expressing concern, as Judith did, that "without [the pension] some old people just wouldn't

survive," or suggesting that the pension was not historically significant because "it would have happened eventually anyway."

Learning to Live Peacefully Together

A corollary of the "fairness" theory of significance was "coexistence." Just as they had argued that certain events were significant because they represented matters of fairness, so, too, students argued for the significance of events that brought diverse people to live together in New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi, for instance, represented both fairness and coexistence. "That's how the Maori and the Pakeha came together," Kiri explained. Similarly, Captain Cook's explorations were significant because they precipitated European immigration to the islands. "He told all the Europeans about us," Hamilton said, "and they came here." When students selected the first Polynesian settlement in New Zealand, they also explained the choice by saying "they were the first people to come in contact with, eventually." Immigration, too, represented one way in which New Zealand became more diverse. "That is a good thing," Reed explained. "If they hadn't have come way back then there wouldn't be as many cultures in New Zealand." When asked why that was a good thing, Reed explained that "people can learn off of each other, like different languages and things like that. I think that's pretty important, because like lots of people that come from other countries can learn from our culture and we can learn off them and what's different between their home country and ours." After listening to Reed, Robert suggested that this gathering of people learning from each other had a larger significance, too. "Like our governments and theirs would be like closer because you see on like the news that different countries are fighting and all, and if they [the immigrants] come to our country they will think that this is not a bad place . . ." Reed interrupted, "and not fight with them?" "Yeah," Robert said. Among this group of four boys, too, three had relatives who were first generation immigrants. "My dad was born in Zimbabwe," Reed said. "My Auntie was born in England," added Arthur. Paul's aunt was born in Scotland. Only Robert claimed to be a "full-on Kiwi." Asked if that meant none of his ancestors had been immigrants, Robert said they were "Kiwis all the way back."

Unlike the fairness concept that was positively perceived across all groups, some students had reservations about coexistence and about immigration. As I noted earlier, some of the Pakeha students expressed discomfort with Maori complaints about loss of land and culture. In this instance, however,

students from Maori and Pacific Islander as well as Pakeha backgrounds expressed discomfort with some aspects of immigration. In one group of boys, for instance, an argument erupted over the inclusion of immigration on the timeline. When Witi suggested putting it on the timeline, Peter adamantly refused. "I don't like it! It's not important!" he declared. Witi objected, saying "That's no kind of reason." Peter continued to object, exclaiming that there were already enough immigrants in the country. "That's sad," Witi said. "If we didn't let immigrants in, than she [the researcher] wouldn't be here." When I explained that I was a temporary visitor rather than an immigrant the conversation moved on to who immigrants were. "Are they just poor people, or can anybody be an immigrant" Tama asked. "Some of us wouldn't be here," Witi explained, "if it weren't for immigrants." Peter, however was adamant. "Jenny Shipley's giving all the Chinese people everything." Tama agreed. "They're the ones who've got more than most people." "And," said Peter, "it should be for the ones who are born here." These comments were a reflection of the recent influx of Asian immigrants, some in the wake of the return of Hong Kong to The People's Republic of China. In at least two groups, too, immigration was associated with refugee status due to the presence in the students' community of European refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Interestingly, though five groups placed immigration on the timeline, they certainly fared less well with these students than it did with American students who tended to view their country as a nation of immigrants and knew at least some of their own immigrant history (Barton & Levstik, 1998). The New Zealand students knew that immigration was part of their history, and that some relatives had immigrated to New Zealand, but only a handful could identify their own immigrant heritage. Like Robert, they perceived themselves to be "full-on Kiwi." When Robert, for instance, who is blond, blue-eyed and freckled, declared himself "Kiwi all the way back" I was surprised. His group had just finished discussing the immigration of the first Polynesians and how Cook's explorations led to European immigration. When I asked him who the first settlers in New Zealand were, he told me the Maori were the first and pointed out the picture of the first outriggers landing in New Zealand. His family wasn't Maori, he said, but "full-on Kiwi." "I wonder where your blond hair and blue eyes came from," I said. "Oh," Robert paused. "You know, I never thought of that. That would be interesting to find out." Robert's response was not unusual. I asked each group about their own immigrant history, but few of them knew much about it. One boy described ancestors emigrating from Ireland in the face of the potato famine, four mentioned emigration from China

and Hong Kong, and at least one person in each of twelve groups identified their ancestry as British. For most students, however, this information was not particularly important. Instead, immigration, when they selected it, was chosen because it got people to New Zealand where they "learned off of each other" and became Kiwis.

Marking New Zealand's Place in the World

Finally, students assigned significance to events on the grounds that it was likely to get New Zealand notice outside its national boundaries. Thus "firsts" such as women's suffrage and the pension were doubly significant. Not only were they issues of fairness, they represented something New Zealand managed to do first in the world. By providing a moral lesson to the rest of the world both were also seen as enhancing New Zealand's international status. As I mentioned earlier, students were initially surprised that New Zealand had managed to grant women's suffrage first, but they were pleased and said that being first was important. As Reed explained, this meant that New Zealand was "first to give females the chance." "That will always be in the history books," Arden said. Reed added that this was like "Jenny Shipley. She'll always be in the history books, too, so like the first female Prime Minister." When asked why this was important, they argued that being a "first" got noticed. Stefan was most articulate about this argument.

Because New Zealand was the first country to give women the vote, and that's important because all people should be treated equally, and New Zealand's the first country to kind of figure that out. They kind of break away from the tradition that women were weaker and shouldn't be allowed to do stuff like that and should just stay at home, and they broke that tradition. Yeah, and it worked, and Kate Sheppard¹² helped and stuff and that just led to stuff all over the world, or the "first world" anyway, and women were allowed to work and vote.

Similarly, World War II was significant, at least in part because it allowed New Zealanders to show the world Kiwi ingenuity, bravery, and responsibility. The Gold Rush and the Dunedin (the refrigerated cargo ship) were important because they connected New Zealand economically with the world (and, sometimes because the Gold Rush brought immigrants to the Westland¹³). As Melissa said, New Zealand needed "stuff that you can export to other countries." "That's why sheep are so important," Grace said. "We could send them to England." As these

students considered what was significant in their national history, then, they looked for events that connected New Zealand to the world, and brought their nation into the view of Britain and the West.

Conclusions

Just as I was finishing this paper I visited a teacher candidate in a third grade classroom in a nearby elementary school. When I arrived the students were rehearsing a play that celebrated the glories of spring in Kentucky. As child after child stood at the microphone extolling the virtues of St. Patrick's Day, Easter (but not Passover), the Derby, daffodils, and Kentucky basketball, their lack of enthusiasm prompted an outburst from their teacher. Didn't they know that other people didn't have as beautiful a spring as Kentucky? Why she knew people in North Carolina who had never even heard of the Derby! Did they want their parents to think that they weren't grateful to be living in this state, able to enjoy all of these wonders? She went on and on, prodding the students into some show of chauvinistic fervor. My student, who grew up in Chile, was appalled. No wonder these children knew so little of the rest of the world, she said. They were constantly encouraged to think of themselves as exceptional, to either ignore others—those who don't celebrate Easter or St. Patrick's Day, for instance—or view them as competitors for first place in some massive contest. And it is easy for those of us in the United States to assume that our experience, our view of the world, our framework for making sense of the past, is somehow universal. Our size and power insulate us. But nationality and geography also position the New Zealanders in this study. Their global position frames how they think and learn and how they assign significance to what they learn just as surely as do the more "local" elements of race, class, gender, and ethnicity (among other things). Cross-national work makes this harder to ignore. It reminds us that *position* involves intersecting circles of influence, some global, some local and some individual. In the New Zealand context, global positionality or *geomentality* includes:

- A colonial past that locates New Zealanders on the margins of the globe with Britain and the West at its center. New Zealand's colonial history represented an attempt to "be more British than the British," as one teacher told me. It focused on replicating British traditions in a new

and sometimes resistant landscape, often imposing foreign traditions on those perceived as "other"—most often Maori and Pacific Islanders. Under such circumstances, a colonizing culture must be seen as superior if it is to survive. Inevitably the colonized culture or cultures are depicted as inferior. The resultant national/colonial history, then, not only describes the extent to which the colony matches the "original," but the extent to which it diverges from it as well. This constant comparison—"how do we measure up?"—shifted the national gaze outward toward Britain, rather than inward on New Zealand (Sinclair, 1989). While the new social studies curriculum pushes for a shift away from a Eurocentric perspective, New Zealand's colonial experience still exerts a powerful influence on student's historical thinking. First, it focuses their historical interest more on other parts of the world than on their national history. While the traditional focus was on Britain, the students in this study reported that they experienced a more global curriculum, sometimes studying "really different places" such as India and Egypt. Second, the colonial experience in New Zealand seems to have encouraged a sense of national inferiority or defensiveness. While one could argue that the "don't tell me, we were last on that" response, and the sense that their own history is less than interesting can be explained by a lack of systematic exposure to national history, American students with little more formal study of their history draw quite the opposite conclusions about their country (Barton & Levstik, 1998). It seems more likely that the students' sense of marginality is attributable to some degree both to their colonial history and their geographic "isolation."

- A history of absorbing the peoples of a number of other heritages and cultures through immigration, conquest, and various attempts at segregation and integration. In doing so, New Zealanders sometimes adapted the myths, symbols and definitions of these various traditions, creating a hybrid culture with various frictions, unresolved issues, and constructions of "otherness". As the students struggled with issues of fairness and coexistence they reflected this dynamic. Their national history is inevitably and officially a history of doubleness, of identity and difference, as the bicultural and multicultural policies of the Ministry of Education make explicit. Students struggled with how to integrate these experiences into

some overarching national story. Both Pakeha and Maori/Pacific Islander students were sympathetic to inclusion. It was "only fair," after all, to include Maori as well as Pakeha on the timeline. Pakeha students, however, worried about giving back land, responding to claims of discrimination, or losing the European-ness of their country. It was not that they didn't think that depredations had occurred; rather, they did not know how to fix any of this in a way that they perceived as fair. Maori and Pacific Islander students, on the other hand, were less interested in reparations than in attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim elements of their past while still participating in the larger New Zealand society. They thought they had something to offer to the Pakeha; they also thought that history was a way to connect with an important, ancestral community.

- A post-colonial present that includes sufficient examples of diverse people in powerful positions to allow students' to conclude that these groups and individuals have a role to play in the country's history. This was particularly interesting in regard to women's suffrage. If we take positionality to be largely local we might expect that the more intimate experience of family relations would overwhelm the more distant behavior of public women. Instead, students described a rather different phenomenon. Despite the inequalities some students described (and sometimes approved) in families, students still ascribed significance to women having an equal chance to take on public roles. In addition, they reported seeing sufficient examples of women in public life to know that one woman's "bad" behavior in public office was not evidence against all women's capacity to exercise leadership. None of the students I interviewed expressed much support for Jenny Shipley, the current Prime Minister, for instance, yet none argued that their view of Shipley extended to other women holding public office, or that her behavior was related to her gender. Rather, as one student explained, it was evidence that "some women can be just as bad as some men."

Within these global circles of influence, gender, class, race and ethnicity also play their part. Among these students, however, responses varied more by ethnoracial group and class than by gender. When Kiri eloquently compared being without history to being a foster child with no memory of family and no connections to the past, she gave voice to a sentiment shared to some extent by all the students. The

difference between Pakeha and Maori/Pacific Islander responses lies in the fact that Kiri had not yet encountered a history that connected her to what she perceived as her past *in school*. Kiri's history, at least as she and other Maori and Pacific Islander students told it, is a history of otherness and resistance rooted in specific local experiences, learned in family or community sites, and divergent from, if not opposed to, Pakeha history (Lye, 1998). When I asked each group what I had left off the timeline, for instance, one group of predominantly Maori and Pacific Islander girls suggested that I needed more pictures based on the artwork of early people. Ripeka said, "I thought maybe Maori drawings that we've got on the South Island. . . People have learned from those, the first people. Like the Pakehas could learn from that, from the things they've left behind, and what was left." After a brief pause, Irihepeti added, echoing comments from African American students in the United States (Barton & Levstik, 1998), "but we don't hear about that much. My mum tells me, though. . ." As this young woman told me about her mother, she clasped a bone carving she wore around her neck. "My mum's quite Maori as well," she said. "My mum gave this to me. Just touching it makes you feel stronger. It has mana, and if people bother you, you can touch it and feel better, you know?"

The students in this study, however, did not perceive history to be exclusively *their* story; rather, they understood history to have a dual purpose. It linked them to various national, racial, and ethnic heritages, but history also provided a window on the rest of the world. It strikes me that this is particularly useful in multicultural societies where the consequences of historical injustices are raw and real. If students can look beyond their own position, if they are curious about the lives of other people in other places and times, if they are open to the possibility that there are multiple ways of interpreting the past, they may be better prepared to deal with the complexities of participating in a multicultural society. At the point at which I interviewed these students, however, their grasp of history was too insubstantial to support any indepth inquiry into the complexities of their own society or of the rest of the world. For some, pieces of history served as touchstones—amulets like the bone carving—that provide a link to a personally significant aspect of the past. For others, history provided fascinating stories about "how people lived long ago". A framework of significance—fairness, coexistence, and connection—connected these bits and pieces of the past into a somewhat cohesive whole. But the connections are tenuous. While better, more complete historical information would certainly enrich this framework, students also lacked exactly what the new

curriculum proposes to offer—practice in investigating historical questions, experience in analyzing interpretations, opportunities to bring historical perspective to bear on social issues, and recognition that one's position within local and global communities influences one's perspective on the past and present. Of course these are suggestions easily made but more difficult to implement. It will be interesting to see how—or if—implementation occurs, and what impact the new curriculum has on students' historical thinking. For those of us interested in positionality and the development of historical thinking, however, the New Zealand experience serves to remind us that our ascription of significance is at least as much a function of our position in the world as of our position in a particular subnational, sociocultural context.

Notes

1. *Pakeha* is a term used by Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders to refer to non-Maori. The definition of the word is the equivalent of "foreigner" but is more commonly used to mean non-Maori. Most often the term is neutral, though it can take on pejorative connotations in some settings. I have used it throughout this paper as the students did, both to identify "otherness" (The pakehas/they). *Pakeha* is a term used by Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders to refer to non-Maori. The definition of the word is the equivalent of "foreigner" but is more commonly used to mean non-Maori. Most often the term is neutral, though it can take on pejorative connotations in some settings. I have used it throughout this paper as the students did, both to identify "otherness" (The pakehas/they came to New Zealand) and to identify self (The pakehas/we came to New Zealand).

2. In one group only two boys participated. All other groups were three or four.

3. I usually spent the first five minutes or so of an interview explaining my purpose ("to understand how people your age think about history and the past"), reminding the students that, since I had a foreign accent, they might need to ask me to repeat or explain words I used, and that I hoped they wouldn't mind if I had to ask them to repeat something when I wasn't clear what they were saying. I also concluded each interview by offering students the chance to ask me whatever they wanted. This turned out to be an interesting source of information about children's world interest.

4. Because gender and age differences were rare I have chosen to provide examples of responses that represent both sexes and a range of grade levels throughout this paper. Readers who wish to establish the groupings of individual students may refer to Appendix C.

5. This pattern is supposed to alter under the new curriculum standards that call for more attention to national and regional (Pacific Rim) history earlier in the curriculum.
6. At the beginning of October, 1998, the Shipley government ended cost-of-living increases for superannuation (retirement). This move, pushed through Parliament in three days in apparent violation of previous agreements among political interest groups, precipitated a series of protests, one major demonstration led by the Anglican Church. At the same time, a new national party led by Maori formed and made the news for much of one week. Many of these news segments included attention to and pictures of prior protest movements, earlier conditions among various ethnic groups, and the like. Another spot on tourism included a Maori commentator arguing that the Maori had for too long been interpreted through Pakeha eyes. "Maori," he said, "is more than sword waving, tongue poking, puha wearing." The *Holmes* show included commentary and interviews on these and similar topics in the period immediately preceding the interviews.
7. While women in some other places (i.e. Wyoming, Utah, Pitcairn Island, and the Isle of Man) could vote before women in New Zealand, New Zealand was the first country in the world where a campaign for women's suffrage was victorious (Coney, 1993).
8. At the time of this study Jenny Shipley was Prime Minister of New Zealand and several women had just been elected to mayoral seats.
9. One group of boys suggested that women were "probably more important" than men because "they look after the homes and all, most of the time, and they have the babies."
10. This claim was made despite the students' almost universal dislike for Mrs. Shipley. Their disapproval was never attributed to Mrs. Shipley's gender and, when asked, they almost always pointed out that there were a number of women in public life—Helen Clark, for instance—whom they supported.
11. The Treaty of Waitangi is generally considered the beginning of British colonial rule in New Zealand. Although never ratified, Maori and Pakeha agreed to submit themselves to British sovereignty in exchange for the cessation of warfare, not just between Maori and Pakeha, but among the Maori as well. Land settlements made as part of the Treaty are still disputed and were not upheld in practice.

12. Kate Sheppard (1847-1934) was a key figure in the women's movement in New Zealand. She had strong views on electoral reform, prison reform, international peace and arbitration, vegetarianism and health. She also kept in contact with her American and British women's rights colleagues (Coney, 1993).
13. *Westland* is the designation given for the area between the Tasman Sea and the Southern Alps on the South Island. It was the center of New Zealand's Gold Rush.

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Appendix A

Materials Used in Interview Task

Captions and Picture Descriptions

Materials consisted of twenty-three laminated photocopies and accompanying captions (captions are written using New Zealand standard spellings), as described below:

First Polynesians. The first Polynesians came to New Zealand beginning in about 950 BCE. According to tradition, a voyager named Kupe named the country Aotearoa. In the 1300s a wave of immigrants arrived, possibly from Hawaiiki, in outrigger canoes. They brought taro, yam, kumara, the rat and the dog. They settled on the islands, and lived there for over three hundred years before Abel Tasman named the country Nieuw Zeeland. [Picture of outrigger and silhouette of someone tossing a fishing net into the sea.]

Captain Cook. Captain Cook and the Endeavour arrive in New Zealand in 1769. Cook soon learned that Maori inhabitants of the islands were powerful, aggressive, and brave. Cook sailed all around New Zealand, producing an accurate map of the country that was used for the next 150 years. This voyage put New Zealand on the European map of the world. [Picture of the Endeavour with sailors and Cook; Mt. Cook in the background.]

Treaty of Waitangi. In 1840, after years of warfare, some 50 Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi, ceding sovereignty to the Queen of England. In return, the Queen guaranteed the Maori possession of the lands, forests, fisheries and other property. The treaty was never ratified, and within ten years was held by the Pakeha courts to be invalid. Despite this, the date of the signing is generally held to be the "founding day" of New Zealand as a British colony. The treaty remains a source of disagreement and civil dissent. [Picture of three Maori men in period clothing pointing toward surrounding landscape.]

Gold Rush. When gold was discovered on the South Island the gold rush brought thousands of miners to NZ, increasing the population of the South Island, and changing NZ's economy. Gold became NZ's largest export. [Picture of miner panning for gold.]

Land Wars. In 1860 Wiremu Kingi's claim to the Waitara starts the Maori Land Wars; vast tracts of land are confiscated from rebel groups. [Picture of a battle between Maori and European warriors.]

Immigration. Immigration is an important way in which the population of New Zealand changes over time. From the first Polynesians who came to Aotearoa to people from Asia and Eastern Europe who enter now, immigration has been a part of New Zealand. In the 1870s the government helped European immigrants and their families to settle in New Zealand. Today, people of Maori, Pacific Islander, European, and Asian ancestry form the population of New Zealand. [Picture of immigrants disembarking at a New Zealand port.]

Education. When the central government took over the responsibility for primary education in 1877, school committees could compel (force) all children between 7 and 13 to attend school. This was an important addition to the responsibilities of central government and a move that made it possible for all children, rich or poor, to at least learn to read and write. [Picture of early school—students and teacher posing for photograph.]

Railroads. With the coming of the railroads huge new tracts of land opened up for settlement. As new settlers moved away from towns, conflicts over land ownership often arose. [Picture of work crew laying track for early railroad.]

Dunedin. In 1882 the first refrigerated cargo ship left NZ for England. Once cargo could be kept cold, NZ could export meat as well as wool. Sheep became a very important part of the NZ economy. [Picture of the Dunedin at sea.]

Women's Suffrage. New Zealand was one of the first countries in the world to grant women the right to vote. While some states in the United States allowed women to vote in some elections before 1893, they couldn't vote in national elections until more than twenty-five years after women got the vote in New Zealand. Despite the vote, women could not serve in Parliament or be Cabinet Ministers. They were active, however, "behind the scenes" and in reform activities. [Picture of women voting for the first time at Devonport Borough Council Chambers.]

Pension. A typical scene at the post office when old age pensions were paid out (1898). The pension was considered a citizen's right, earned by years of paying taxes. At first, this money was only given to men who were very poor and had "good morals". Later it was extended to all those who contributed to the pension system. This was the first old age pension in the world. [Picture of senior citizens collecting pension for the first time at a local post office.]

John Seddon. Richard John Seddon began a new, democratic style of politics in New Zealand. Under his administration, a number of reforms occurred that appeared to give "ordinary" people more power. Seddon sought all the publicity he could get, such as this picture from a construction project, to advertise the public works and railway construction projects begun during his administration. [Picture of Seddon with wheelbarrow—"For God's Own Country"—along with other officials.]

Cook Islands. In 1901, NZ annexed the Cook Islands. Cook Islanders now make up about one-fifth of NZ's population. [Picture of the annexation ceremony in the Cook Islands.]

Cars. The development of the car gave people freedom of movement, which led to rapid changes in NZ society. Automotive import and production brought jobs and changed where people could live and work and what they could do for recreation. [Picture of lines of cars parked on a wharfside roadway.]

Rehab. Farms. In order to help returning soldiers after World War I, the government helped them settle on "rehab" farms. Unfortunately, the land was often of poor quality and the men frequently lacked the

appropriate skills. Many farmers found themselves with huge debts. When the nation experienced money problems in 1920-1921 many farmers lost their land.[Picture of "rehab" farm workers.]

Land Girls. With many men off to war, life changed for women in New Zealand. Women entered many occupations previously closed to them. These Land Girls on Ruakura State Farm, Waikato, were doing work often done by men before the war. This scheme was in part designed to train wives for farmers, as well as to give young women the skills necessary to keep farms going throughout the war. [Picture of young women stringing barbed wire fence.]

WWII. Nearly 200,000 kiwis were called into battle during World War II. More than 10,000 died. Author James Michener once claimed that the bravest soldier in WWII was a New Zealander. The major change brought by the war, however, was an end to isolation. New Zealand entered alliances with other European and American allies that extended long after the war ended. [Picture of NZ soldiers marching along a dirt track.]

Television. The advent of television marked a major change in how people learned about each other and the rest of the world. For the first time, sound and moving images could come into people's homes. [Picture of a child stretched out on the floor in front of a television set.]

State Housing. Many New Zealanders grew up in state housing suburbs such as this one at Tamaki. By the early 1970s almost 70% of New Zealand's housing was owner-occupied, and new suburbs sprawled across many parts of the country. These new houses were important for the post-war baby boomers and the many new immigrants entering New Zealand.[Picture of a block of state housing with family in front of one unit.]

Springbok Tour. When the South African rugby team came to New Zealand in 1981, a series of protests began. Protestors objected because the South African team represented the apartheid (segregation) policies of the South African government. Protests increased, and so did police and fan responses. Violence resulted, with protestors beaten and arrested and police setting up barbed wire barriers around playing fields. Many New Zealanders had very strong—and opposing—feelings about these events and especially about the police and government response. [Picture of soldiers with shields and face masks and protestors lined up across from them.]

Rainbow Warrior. The Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" protesting against French nuclear tests was bombed in 1985 by French secret agents in Auckland. [Picture of the Rainbow Warrior sinking in Auckland Harbour.]

Nuclear Protests. In 1990, overwhelming public opinion forced the new National government to maintain the Lange government's anti-nuclear policy. This policy set up a 320-km nuclear-free zone around the shores of New Zealand, and forced the U.S. to keep nuclear armaments out of New Zealand ports. The U.S. broke off all defence arrangements with New Zealand. [Picture of a demonstration: Students Against a Nuclear Future.]

Shipley. Jenny Shipley, sworn in as New Zealand's Prime Minister in 1997, is the first woman Prime Minister in the country's history. Upon entering her new office she said that her ambition is that every New Zealander shall have the opportunity to lead successful, satisfying and rewarding lives.[Picture of Jenny Shipley—head and shoulders.]

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Have you ever seen a timeline like this in your classroom or in books? Do you know what they're for? This is a timeline that begins almost 3,000 years ago, and these are pictures from different times between then and now. Each one has a caption that explains a little about it. You're going to work together as a group to decide which of these are important enough to put on the timeline. You can only pick 8, so you have to decide which are the most important. After you've decided on the eight most important ones, I'll ask you to explain each of your choices. Do you have any questions before you start? Remember, when you start, you'll need to read the captions on each one, and then talk to each other about which ones you think are important enough to put on the timeline and why. If there are any words you don't understand in the captions I will help you with them.

After students select the pictures, ask:

For each of the selected pictures (hold up picture; read caption): Explain why you think this picture is important in New Zealand's history.

For each of the non-selected pictures (hold up picture; read caption): Might someone else think this picture was important in New Zealand's history? Why or why not.

After students complete task, ask:

1. Are there any pictures that you don't think anyone would pick?
2. Are there any parts of New Zealand's history that you think are very important, but were left off this timeline?
3. How do people know what happened a long time ago?
4. What are some of the main things that have changed over time? Why have things changed over time?
5. Why do you think people dressed differently in the past? Do you think they acted differently than they do now? Why? Do you think people treated each other differently in the past? Why?
6. What kinds of things have you learned about history or the past or long ago at school?
7. Why do you think history is something you study at school? Why is it important?
8. Have you ever studied about history or the past or long ago anywhere other than at school?
9. Do you think learning about history or the past or long ago is interesting? Why or why not?
10. Later on in school, like next year, what do you think are some of the things you'll learn about in history? Can you think of any famous people or famous events that you think you'll learn about someday?
11. Are there some parts of history that you would really like to learn about someday?
12. What are some of the most important things about history that you've learned at school? Why do you think they are important? What are the least important things you've learned about history in school, and why don't you think they're important?
13. What are the most important things you've learned about history outside of school?

Appendix C

Age of Students Interviewed

All names for students and their schools are pseudonyms.

Girls

Corydon SchoolGroup One

Liu
Linlee
Heather
Ruth

Group Two

Karen
Cory
Faith

St. Mathews SchoolGroup One

Ellen
Alexi
Sally
Jean

Group Two

Rene
Naylor
Judith

Wainui SchoolGroup One

Kiri
Tiana
Moana

Group Two

Ripeka
Riwia
Irihapeti

Seaside SchoolGroup One

Anna
Grace
Meara

Group Two

Catherine
Melissa
Susan

Boys

Corydon SchoolGroup One

Robert
Reed
Paul
Frederick

Group Two

Jason
Kenneth
Gregory
Kyle

St. Mathews SchoolGroup One

Alan
Ames
Hamilton

Group Two

Shawn
Dougal
Davis

Wainui SchoolGroup One

Tama
Witi
Peter
Tainui

Seaside SchoolGroup One

Chris
Tom
Joseph

Group Two

Mark
Stefan

Appendix D
Interview Responses by Gender

Pictures	Girls	Boys
<u>TOP CHOICES</u>		
Women's Suffrage (15)		
Captain Cook/Endeavor (15)		
Treaty of Waitangi (13)		
World War II (11)		
<u>SECOND LEVEL</u>		
Gold Rush (7)		
Education (7)		
Land Wars (7)		
<u>THIRD LEVEL: BETWEEN 1/3 AND 3/5 OF GROUPS</u>		
Polynesians (6)		
Pension (5)		
Immigration (5)		
<u>FOURTH LEVEL: LESS THAN 1/3 OF GROUPS</u>		
Dunedin (3)		
Jenny Shipley (3)		
Cars (3)		
Anti-nuclear zone (2)		
Rainbow Warrior (2)		
<u>ONLY ONE SELECTION</u>		
Land Girls (1)		
Railroads (1)		
Cook Islands (1)		
Springbok Tour (1)		
Television (1)		
John Seddon (1)		
Farmers (1)		
<u>NO SELECTION BY</u>		

ANY GROUP
State Housing (0)